

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

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TRSE-00 OFA-01 /071 W

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FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1244

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EFIS, MARR, NATO, PFOR, IC, NO, UK

SUBJ: ICELANDIC FOREIGN MINISTER INTERVIEWED ON  
FISHERIES DISPUTE

REF: OSLO 1076

SUMMARY: ICELAND'S FOREIGN MINISTER AUGUSTSSON HAS  
TOLD A NORWEGIAN NEWSPAPER THAT IF UK NAVAL SHIPS  
DO NOT LEAVE ICELANDIC WATERS, HE THOUGH ICELAND  
SHOULD CONSIDER LEAVING NATO AND CLOSING DOWN KEFLAVIK,  
SAYING HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE MORE NATURAL TO CLOSE  
KEFLAVIK THAN TO WITHDRAW FROM NATO. HE SAID HE THOUGH  
THE KEFLAVIK AGREEMENT WOULD EVENTUALLY BE CANCELLED AND  
THAT THE FISHERIES CONFLICT WOULD NOT BE SOLVED  
BEFORE THE END OF THE UPCOMING SESSION OF THE UN LOS  
CONFERENCE. END SUMMARY.

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1. ICELANDIC FOREIGN MINISTER AUSTSSON REPORTEDLY

TOLD THE WEST NORWEGIAN NEWSPAPER STAVANGER "AFTENBLADET" IN AN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED MARCH 3 THAT "IF BRITISH NAVAL VESSELS DO NOT LEAVE ICELANDIC WATERS, ICELAND SHOULD CONSIDER BOTH CANCELLING ITS MEMBERSHIP IN NATO AS WELL AS THE AGREEMENT WITH THE US CONCERNING THE KEFLAVIK BASE." AGUSTSSON POINTED OUT THIS WAS A PERSONAL OPINION BUT, HE ADDED, ONE THAT MORE AND MORE OF HIS COUNTRYMEN SHARED. HE SAID THE CONFLICT WOULD NOT BE SOLVED BEFORE THE CONCLUSION OF THE UN LOS CONFERENCE IN NEW YORK MARCH 15.

2. "FOR THE MOMENT IT WOULD BE MORE NATURAL TO CLOSE KEFLAVIK THAN TO CANCEL NATO MEMBERSHIP," AGUSTSSON IS QUOTED AS SAYING. "THUS WE WOULD BE CONTENT WITH BELONGING TO NATO WITHOUT HAVING FOREIGN TROOPS STATIONED ON ICELANDIC SOIL." AGUSTSSON REMINDED THE INTERVIEWER THAT HE WAS A MEMBER OF THE CENTER GOVERNMENT WHICH RESIGNED AFTER THE 1974 ELECTIONS. HE ADDED: "THEN I SUGGESTED THAT THE AMERICANS SHOULD WITHDRAW FROM KEFLAVIK BY STEPS, AND ONLY MAINTAIN RADAR PERSONNEL AND AN AIR UNIT FOR A LIMITED PERIOD OF TIME," AND HE WENT ON TO SAY: "BUT I STILL THINK THAT WHATEVER THE OUTCOME OF THE FISHING CONFLICT, THE AGREEMENT CONCERNING KEFLAVIK WILL BE CANCELLED WITHIN A CERTAIN PERIOD OF TIME."

3. WHEN ASKED WHAT NATO'S SUBSTITUTE FOR KEFLAVIK MIGHT BE HE SUGGESTED THULE ON GREENLAND, SCOTLAND AND POSSIBLY OTHERS. IT WAS MAINLY A QUESTION OF MONEY AND KEFLAVIK IS TODAY NO DOUBT THE MOST REASONABLE ALTERNATIVE, HE STATED.

4. HE SAID REMOVING THE BASE WOULD MEAN THAT ICELAND WOULD HAVE TO TAKE A MORE NEUTRAL STANCE IN FOREIGN POLICY BUT WITHOUT GIVING UP NATO MEMBERSHIP. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE STATED, "IT IS BECOMING MORE DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN TO MY COUNTRYMEN WHY NATO MEMBERSHIP IS SO IMPORTANT, WHEN OUR SO-CALLED FRIENDS IN THE ALLIANCE FOR DEFENSE DON'T HELP US, EVEN THOUGH WE

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ARE ATTACKED ON OUR OWN TERRITORY BY ONE OF THE NATO MEMBERS."

5. THE FOREIGN MINISTER DID NOT SEE THE SWEDISH DEFENSE EXAMPLE AS BEING QUITE APPLICABLE TO ICELAND, SINCE "WE DON'T HAVE OUR OWN MILITARY FORCES. THEREFORE, NATO MEMBERSHIP IS A CERTAIN SECURITY."

6. AGUSTSSON SAID THAT THE ICELANDIC GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED TO ESTABLISH A COMMITTEE OF THE JUSTICE AND FINANCE MINISTRIES AND COAST GUARD DIRECTOR TO SET OUT A PROPOSAL TO STRENGTHEN THE COAST GUARD. THE GROUP MIGHT DISCUSS THE POSSIBILITY OF BUYING OR BORROWING BOATS AND PLANES FROM NORWAY OR OTHER COUNTRIES.

7. COMMENTING ON NORDIC COUNCIL HANDLING IN COPENHAGEN OF THE UK-ICELANDIC DISPUTE HE SAID ICELAND APPRECIATED ALL FORMS OF SUPPORT, WOULD HAVE PREFERRED THE STRONGER PROPOSAL EXPRESSING REGRET AT THE UK USE OF FORCE SET FORWARD BY NORWAY'S LEFTIST LEADER FINN GUSTAVSEN, BUT APPRECIATED THE COMPROMIST APPROACH.

8. AGUSTSSON SAID HE APPRECIATED NORWAY'S EFFORTS IN THE FISHING DISPUTE WITHIN THE NATO COUNCIL. ASKED IF HE WOULD PREFER FOREIGN MINISTER FRYDENLUND TO ACT AS NEGOTIATOR WITH THE BRITISH HE SAID THERE WAS NO NEED FOR A NEGOTIATOR; THE ICELANDERS CAN TALK TO THE BRITISH THEMSELVES; THE ONLY CONDITION WAS FOR THE UK TO CHANGE ITS ATTITUDE.  
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